

CAPT. JACK CROSS

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SPECIAL COLLECTIONS





CAPT. JACK CROSS

—Reproduction of a sketch by Robert MacKinnon



At the request of the Macmillan Company, publishers of THE PAINTED ARROW, by Frances Gaither, who dedicated her book to him, Captain Jack Cross prepared the following short story of his life.



### LIFE OF CAPTAIN JACK CROSS

I was born in 1853 in one of the old Saxon homes in the weald of Sussex. It was nearly in the shadow of the Southdowns and within a few miles from Avingdean where stood the old oak that sheltered Prince Charlie, when he hid from the Roundheads. Here, under its leafy boughs, if possible, we would meet and lunch when out with the hounds. I went to Public School and college to be educated as an Episcopal clergyman. It was not my calling at that time, so instead I went to the other extreme and was for years on the London Exchange.

To my mind this period of the eighties was the brightest of Victoria's reign. At that time I became an officer of the Queen's Westminster Guards and we had many thrilling adventures during my eight years of service for



we had to deal with the Fennian uprisings.

It was during these years that the pageant of the Jubilee of Queen Victoria occurred. This was a marvellous display of color and military organizations. The Guard of Honor riding around the Queen's carriage was composed of Indian Princes decked in all their jewels, their turbans scintillating like the colors of the rainbow with diamonds, rubies, and sapphires. Such a sight was never before seen and I do not think ever will be again. All the Crown Princes acted as guards. I still cling to the memory of Crown Prince Frederick of Germany in his white kid uniform of the Cuirassiers. And I can still see, at the entrance of the Abbey, the beloved Queen of the people, in her simple bonnet of black and her plain attire, in striking contrast to the colorful



pageant around her.

This was a day of brilliant names in London: Gladstone and Disraeli were at the height of their fame. Parnell, I met and knew well, and although we never agreed I shall always have a great admiration for him.

This recalls one of the episodes of my life when Parnell, Major Elphinston and I started in my sloop, "Saucy Lass," for the Zuyder Zee. We were caught in a storm in the North Sea and for fourteen days and nights we fought the elements, never expecting to save our lives. At last we found ourselves on the coast of the Shetland Islands where we found a mutual friend, a Mr. McQueen, who owned quite a great deal of the Shetlands. After being taken care of there for a week, the others took train back to London, but the skipper and I returned by



the same boat to Yarmouth.

At this time I also met many of the real thinking people of England, as I often dined with a relative by marriage, George Eliot. When we let our minds travel back to the Irvings and the Terrys, the Beerbohm Trees and the Kendalls, we recall a galaxy of talent that I think it will be hard to reproduce.

Then came a break in the Argentine which hit the largest banks and many others and practically cleaned me out. As my people had passed on, I determined to come to America.

At first America seemed a foreign country and so after making many mistakes and blunders I found myself on Christmas Eve in a hotel in Winnipeg. I was very lonely when, suddenly, I heard two old college chums' voices, and



meeting them, found that they had come all the way from Calgary by dog team. You must remember that this was before railroads crossed the country. Nothing would do but I must go back with them. We often slept in our sleeping bags at 40° below zero. The wolves waked us in the night and we jumped up to make the fires brighter and beat them off. It was a great experience that I have never regretted.

From there I went into the Kootenays and became interested in mining and after years of wandering found myself in Guadalajara, Mexico. Coming up to St. Louis on business, I met there Eloise Le Cardiner, who became my wife. This was about thirty-two years ago. Everybody knows what a good woman can do to a man's life, and I do feel that I have indeed been blessed by having one of the best women a man has ever had. After our marriage we returned to Mexico.



We became friends with the Governor of Jalisco while developing a copper mine and getting it in shape, but another of their revolutions came along and we were lucky to escape with our lives, losing everything else.

After drifting around, our nerves nearly shattered, we found ourselves coming to Fairhope in Alabama, down on Mobile Bay. Although we came for only a month, we have stayed, for we found here such a wonderful situation, besides a town founded on an ideal, as it is a Single Tax Colony, and including a School of Organic Education. All these things have attracted so many distinguished people that I may safely say I have met hundreds of people who are still friends of mine and I have never found any place that is so interesting.

It was here that I met our friend, Mrs. Frances Gaither. At that time she and her husband had a cottage



here which I could call my second home. When she dedicated this book to me (Painted Arrow), I do not think anything ever gave me such pleasure, because I felt the love behind it.

Fairhope, Alabama, February, 1931.



## SAGE NUMBERS FRI

## Fairhope Resident Always Ready To Offer Counsel

BY DOLLY DALRYMPLE

EVER since childhood, I have heard the aphorism which is ascribed to Ralph Waldo Emerson, to the effect that "if a man write a better book, preach a better sermon, or make a better mousetrap than his neighbor, though he build his house in the woods, the world will make a beaten path to his door."

But it was not until I had the pleasure recently of meeting Capt. Jack Cross, of Fairhope, Ala., that I recall ever encountering a practical demonstration of Emerson's philosophy.

For, in the little town of Fairhope, Capt. Jack Cross, who is lovingly known as "The Sage of Fairhope," and his good wife live unpretentiously and simply, yet people from all walks of life, from all sections of the world, have found the way to their hospitable home, where this happy couple gives out so much warmth, and light, and joy.

Capt. Cross, it seems to me, is the prototype of Emerson's aphorism, and if the great author had known Capt. Jack as his legion of friends love to call him, he would no doubt have felt just that way about it, too.

Capt. Jack is a different personality to portray in cold type; there is something so ethereal, so elusive, about him, and yet so human and so normal, that one hesitates to emphasize one phase of his character more than the other.

His philosophy of life is what has attracted people to his home in Fairhope, a philosophy, which, as Emerson has aptly said, "has gathered over the edge of physics to peep into the realm of metaphysics." It is a philosophy, or more to you would call it a habit; yet whatever it is, it leaves one full of reminiscence, like the odor of lavender in an old box, recalling memories of other days, a philosophy, suggestive, not alone of an amazing personality, but the influence of that personality; not a presence only, but a pervasive spirit.

CAPT. CROSS' life is an ebullient story. At the age of 80, he never shares a page of the book which has been opened to him through these aeons of time; there has never been an hour when he has not found it good to be alive. His boundless exuberation fills you when you meet him; his optimism is contagious; the whole world seems to be smiling at him, and the human race children. He brings a very real and genuine sympathy to human kind in a wordless way, and his love for his fellow men.

This I sensed in a talk I had with Capt. Cross recently at the hospitable home of Judge and Mrs. William E. Fort, when he was a visitor here for a few days, sharing his visit with two other close friends, Dr. and Mrs. Cabot Lull.

At the feet of wisdom I sat, filling my heart and soul with the beautiful thoughts which this kindly man exudes and as the blue-gray smoke in the big log fire curled through the chimney and the dusk of the night came on, I peered into the life and career of this unusual man, wondering, asking him all sorts of questions, where he came from, what had prompted his studies in certain directions, and many other things.

Small of stature, his hair slightly tinged with gray, his face wreathed in smiles, his step as buoyant and as resilient as that of a man many years his junior, Capt. Jack is interesting to young and old, rich and poor, white and black.

And these are some of the things I learned about this man, so widely beloved, so greatly respected and so frequently sought.

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CAPT. CROSS has made Fairhope his home 24 years. He is an Englishman by birth, receiving his title of "captain" when he served in the Queen's Westminster eight years or more.

"Before deciding to settle in Fairhope," Capt. Jack said, "I spent several years in Canada and also in Mexico, after I came to the United States and it was from Guadalajara that I went to Fairhope."

"Once in Fairhope, I liked the place so well, the environment, the people and everything about it, that I chose it for my home and there I have lived ever since."

Capt. Jack found many congenial friends in and near Fairhope, among them Roderick MacKenzie, the noted artist, and Frances Gaither, who dedicated her enchanting story, "The Pointed Arrow," to Capt. Jack.

His home, which includes a wonderful library, is adorned with paintings, etchings, bits of sculpture and other rare objets d'art, among the collection being works by Prior (Chicago), Frederick. Wahl, and

Prang, the noted lithographer who is represented by lithographs of some of his rare ceramics.

"In the little city of Fairhope," Capt. Jack interpolates, "we have a very fine library, containing some 14,000 books, which I consider very unusual for so small a place. The library is one of my hobbies, and as a member of the board it pleased me very much when the librarian told me that in one day she had seen 158 books passed over the library tables to people deeply interested in reading."

After even a very short conversation with Capt. Jack one finds that his reading is mostly along deep lines; for he visions for one vistas of long deep studies in thought; studies of other times and other things, which few of us are brave enough, or maybe I should say, are enough interested in, to fathom.

Capt. Jack has pursued these lines to such an extent that people from every country practically in the world come to his door for council and companionship; Europe, Asia, exotic climes, send their representatives, who, seeking to learn more of the occult, sit at his feet and listen.

More than 800 persons write to Capt. Jack, who, as I said before, is the prototype of Emerson's aphorism which leads people to his little house in Fairhope; and he has the rare quality of knowing who to talk to and who not to.

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ONE OF Capt. Jack's most beloved friends is Clarence Darrow, who often visits him, and with whom there is a tender bond of congeniality.

"Clarence Darrow is not an atheist, as some think," said Capt. Jack in discussing the great criminal lawyer. "He is an agnostic. He is the greatest lover of humanity I have ever met in all my life."

"In forming opinions it is always well to remember that we are all children of God; and there is good in everyone. When we know what it is to be poor, and when we know what it is to be rich, then we have

a common feeling for each other, which is brotherhood."

Capt. Jack's acquaintance with literary England comprises a vast number of celebrities and specimens of these he said:

"George Eliot was related to me by marriage, her husband's name being Cross. I knew her well and regarded her as one of the most wonderful women I ever knew. I have often dined with her when she was Mrs. Cross, and enjoyed her society more than I can say."

"It is more than 40 years since I was in England and it really means nothing to me today. It is all so changed, yet I knew always that it must go. Abraham Fleeger has said that 'England today is more American than America.'"

"In my day and time I knew the great Henry Irving and lovely Ellen Terry; Gladstone in his prime, and many others."

Asked his opinion of the "Letters of Bernard Shaw and Ellen Terry," Capt. Jack said:

"Knowing Ellen Terry as I did, I cannot visualize Shaw and Terry and I believe I found the keynote of what many think who knew the great actress, when I make that statement."

Of Shaw and Wells and Galsworthy and many others, Capt. Jack talked interestingly, saying among other things: "Wells really has a vision. I see him as a real thinker."

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# ENDS BY THOUSANDS

OF COURSE, as no conversation is complete without some mention of the depression which envelops the world, it was mentioned to Capt. Jack, who said in his gentle, kindly manner:

"Has anything great ever come without suffering? We must realize, first of all, that the only thing that can bring the world out of its present situation is a consciousness of brotherhood.

"I recall 50 years ago hearing Canon Farrar say in Westminster Abbey, in a great sermon he preached that there was no such place as hell. He was almost put out

of the church for the statement.

"The most optimistic sign we have today is that the word brotherhood is becoming universal; there is the interest we have in unemployment, about which formerly we cared so little. Men see that this interest not only means better business, and is a practical thing, but a beautiful thing as well."

Many more things did Capt. Jack talk about in our happy conversation, of L. Adams Beck, whom he regards as having the truest knowledge, of anyone he knows, of the East and its occultism, which she has written about so well; of Mary Johnston and her interest in these things, especially her "Sweet Rockets," a background for her thoughts along these lines; of Will Levington Comfort, who visits him frequently at Fairhope, and whom he regards as one of the greatest thinkers of the age, and many others, all so rare and so inspiring.

That I am not biased in my high opinion of Capt. Jack and his ingratiating personality, is corroborated by a charming tribute which the lovely, cultured Mrs. Lull has paid him.

In talking with me about Capt. Jack, she said among other things:

"\* \* \*  
"THINKING of Capt. Jack, I am reminded of the genial English essayist, E. V. Lucas, who somewhere tells us that the ultimate object of travel is the enrichment of personality, an object to be attained by even the casual tourist, not as the result of 'doing' any specified number of historic places, nor by meeting eminent or interesting people, but rather by selecting and

hanging upon the walls of his memory definite, well-balanced, enduring pictures to which in thought he can return throughout the years. The possession of such a picture in one's memory is more to be prized than 1,000 blurred impressions which is the usual heritage of the returning tourist. Capt. Cross is such a picture in the minds of all of those privileged to know him. Once seen, he is never forgotten.

"FROM the beginning of my visit at Fairhope, the captain was characteristically kind, accepting us without question into his circle. Being strangers and hampered with the usual conventionalities, we were a little startled when on the second day of our stay he announced casually that we would walk over to the Gaithers' for tea. The fact that the Gaithers were quite unaware of the plan was unimportant. Fairhope is like that. Since that day, I have met Mrs. Gaither, learned of the interesting things that she and Rice Gaither, her husband, are doing in New York. Her book, "The Painted Arrow," was a best seller among recent books for boys and girls; "Fatal River," just out, is an outstanding contribution to the history of the Mississippi River.

"They say that if the sand of Fairhope once gets into one's shoes one must return. We must have accumulated more than our due share during those early days, for we have returned whenever possible. There is a timelessness about Fairhope and Capt. Jack, a sense of detachment, as if one had stepped into another world, that sends one away refreshed and renewed. It is a quieting thing to be able to close one's eyes and see him there in his quaint high-backed chair by the hearth, surrounded by books, many enriched for him by the author's affectionate message on the fly leaf, his whole room reminiscent of his friends who have left their books or pictures or photographs, such men as Waugh, Roderick MacKenzie, Will Levington Comfort, Frederick Frier, our own Dr. Henry Edmonds, and countless others, not to omit Clarence Darrow, who, in theology, may be far removed from the captain, but in affection is nearer than all the rest perhaps.

"IF WE asked him his secret I believe he might say, 'Go apart and think, learn to be rather than merely do. Brood on some great idea for a little while every day, such as the power of man to enlarge his consciousness beyond the narrow walls of self until he is aware of a larger group, and ultimately, aware of the God who created life. Or think on simple things, the love of friend for friend, the power of sacrifice, or the mystery of a dewdrop on a Summer rose.

AND Mrs. Fort, another dear friend of Capt. Jack's, whose opinion Birmingham values so highly because of her beautiful character and unusual erudition, says of this amazing personality:

"Capt. Cross, son of a dignitary of the Church of England, came to this country many years ago to indulge in the luxury of independent thinking. Stifled by an atmosphere so colored by tradition, he felt that in America he could find his bearings. Never content to skim over the surface of things, an inner urge impelled him to probe into the primal causes of phenomena, and, for the best part of a long lifetime, he has studied the origin and development of thought and religions, traveling through a maze of contradictions to find the unity which underlies the whole. Nor has he scanned the past only, but has studied the metaphysical side of that strange development towards which the race is said to be moving, and which mathematicians call the fourth dimension.

"Yet there is about him nothing technical or coldly erudite. The center of him is a heart, great in gentleness and compassion, and what he has learned has been woven into the warp and woof of him, so that his real self has not been impinged upon, but enriched. There in his living room, beside the open fire, he sits in his own especial chair, and there come to him men and women from all parts of the country in need of his understanding and mellow wisdom.

"In his younger days he made and lost several fortunes, so now he and his loyal wife permit their guests to maintain themselves while in their home, and with this happy arrangement, those who need him can go at any time, without feeling themselves a burden.

"And Capt. Jack shepherds this flock! Literally hundreds of men and women write to him, not frequently, but when they need his counsel. And he sends a line, a telegram, a gleam of faith, a ray of love and they turn back to the furrow.

"Mary Johnston has written a book which tells of a home where people went for a day or a week, because it held something for which they felt a need. There are such places and always at the heart of such a home is a person from whom there radiates a light. Those who have lost their way, go towards the light quite simply, for though we often walk in darkness, we are seekers of the sun.

"Capt. Jack's home is one towards which the travelers turn. And at the center of it is Capt. Jack himself, sitting in his chair before an open fire."



## Sage Of Fairhope Is Heard In Talk At Mrs. Lull's Home

Capt. Jack Cross, of Fairhope, Ala., has been the house guest of Dr. and Mrs. Cabot Lull, and now is spending a few days with Judge and Mrs. William E. Fort.

The arrival in Birmingham Monday of Capt. Cross was greeted with warm interest by his many friends here, and by others who had heard of him and were eager to meet him. The name by which he is known to many, "The Sage of Fairhope," had preceded him, and those who were privileged to see him and hear him talk felt that it was a fitting pseudonym.

No longer young, as men count years, Capt. Cross breathes out the ripe and tempered wisdom of one who has spent half a lifetime in search of truth. With the steady balance of a background of science, he has advanced with the foremost thinkers of the day over the edge of physics to peer into the realm of metaphysics, and it is here that he finds a new horizon of light opening to those who have eyes to see.

One of a group of over 200 men and women, including many notable names, Capt. Cross, in collaboration with these quiet but potent workers, has studied the laws and cycles of many times, nations, religions—and mellow with wisdom of the past and the tolerance it evokes, he looks clear-eyed upon the future and pierces through the fog.

It is no wonder that a small group of friends heard him with intense interest as he gave an informal lecture at Mrs. Lull's home Wednesday afternoon. Birmingham does not often have the privilege of entertaining a guest of his kind, and our city is richer because his kindly and gentle spirit has dwelt among us.

## Capt. J. R. Cross Passes in 82nd Year

Fairhope suffered a heavy loss in the death of another of its highly esteemed elder citizens, Capt. J. R. Cross, who passed away Tuesday morning at five o'clock, after an illness of several weeks.

Born in England in 1851 the Captain was in his 82nd year, but was young in thought and feeling.

He was one of the unique and interesting characters of which Fairhope has seemed to have an unusual number.

He had an extraordinary capacity for friendship and, once having satisfied himself that the recipient of his friendship was worthy no doubt thereof was afterward permitted to enter his mind.

Little of his early history is known here, but enough to know that he traveled much and had thus added a rich store of experience which was drawn upon often for the enlightenment and entertainment of friends.

Capt. Cross and Mrs. Cross had been residents of Fairhope since coming here from Mexico in 1908. They had charge of the development of Henry F. Ring's model farm a few miles out from Fairhope and operated it for a few years, and then came into town and engaged in the hotel business, operating "The Gables" for a number of years. They then built the Fairhope Hotel. This business gave the Captain especial opportunity to exercise his friend-making qualities and these friends are scattered far and wide; all of whom will hear with deep sorrow of his taking away.

It was his wish that his funeral service should be simple and this was carried out. The beautiful Episcopal service was read at Mask Mortuary, by Rev. Thompson, Episcopal pastor, concluded at the graveside in the local cemetery, without song, except the singing at the cemetery by the large assembled audience of a verse of the Fairhope song: "Fairhope I Love You"—and he did love it and its people.

The Captain was greatly interested in the local library, being a member of the Library Board since 1914. He was a loyal member of the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation.

The sympathy of the community goes out to Mrs. Cross.

## Resolution Library Board On Loss of Capt. Cross

At a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Fairhope Public Library Association Nov. 1, 1932, the following resolution was passed.

We, the Trustees of the Fairhope Public Library Association, do hereby make record of our profound gratitude for the life and labors of Capt. J. R. Cross. Our Vice President, a member of the Board of Trustees for eighteen years he was ever a wise counsellor and faithful friend. We shall miss his gentle presence, but we are grateful for the experience of having worked with him and the inspiration which we shall never lose, gained from this contact.

In witness of our affection for him and thankfulness for his life of service we make this record to be kept in the minute book of the Fairhope Public Library Association, copies to be sent to Mrs. Cross and the Fairhope Courier.

Patrice B. Fuller, Secretary







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## LAST RITES PAID FAIRHOPE SAGE AT COAST RESORT

Impressive Funeral Given Capt.  
Jack Cross, Famed  
Over World

Capt. Jack Cross, "Sage of Fairhope," friend of artists and authors from every section of the world, who died Tuesday in his home at the Single Tax colony, was buried yesterday morning as all of the community paused to pay tribute.

Captain Cross lived in Fairhope for about 25 years and during that time attracted many notable visitors to the colony. Roderick Mackenzie, Mobile artist, who did a crayon sketch of him, was high on the list of friends. Another was Frances O. J. Gaither, of New York, who dedicated her book, "The Painted Arrow," to him, and E. B. Gaston, editor of the Fairhope Courier.

Being widely known for his studies in philosophy, Captain Cross received letters from far and near. It is said more than 800 persons wrote to him from all parts of the world on personal, literary, artistic and cultural problems. He was presented with such treasures as autographed first editions, paintings, photographs and objects d'art. The walls contain pictures by Frederick Friar of Chicago; Wahl, and Prang, the noted lithographer.

One of Captain Cross' outstanding friends was Clarence Darrow, famous criminal lawyer and atheist, although the former had a membership in the Fairhope Episcopal church.

Judge and Mrs. William E. Fort of Birmingham and Dr. and Mrs. Cabot Lull of that city, close personal friends of Captain Jack, were his hosts on his last visit to Birmingham, in February. Another Birmingham friend is Dr. Henry Edmonds, while Will Levington Comfort of Pasadena, noted author of many novels, whose books and pictures were among Captain Jack's library treasures, and who expected to visit the latter this year, was another close friend. Comfort, Captain Jack regarded as one of the most advanced thinkers of this age. Francis Holt-Wheeler, editor and archaeologist of Tunis, Africa, was another close friend as well as fellow countryman.

Related by marriage to George Eliot, Captain Cross, in the 40 years he spent in England, contacted many celebrities of an earlier day. Henry Irving, the lovely Ellen Terry, and Gladstone in his prime were among these. L. Adams Beck, who wrote the famous fictional biographies under the name of E. Barrington, was one of his correspondents and was regarded by Captain Jack as the truest Orientalist of the present day.







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